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ABSTRACT

Public displeasure with schooling is related to the greater expectations people place in schools when events seem awry in the society at large, as attested by recent problems with crime, drugs, and high unemployment. Today, public dissatisfaction extends to all areas of the educational system and confidence in educational programs and in schools must be restored. Colleges and schools have graduated too many barely literate people and too many poorly prepared teachers and administrators have been sent into the field. Public perceptions of these inadequacies have led to nationwide passage of educational reform laws. Legislatures and boards of regents have responded by initiating improvements in teacher preparation programs, competency testing prior to and after certification, higher entrance requirements, revised curricula, mandatory teacher evaluation, performance based accreditation, and merit pay. The 14 states that comprise the Southern Regional Education Board have pioneered much reform legislation. Recent actions in the Southeast include closure of small state-supported colleges, combining of programs, budget cuts, changes in certification requirements for pincipals, and changes in school accreditation. Provisional certification of teachers and administrators and recertification through school-based staff development will affect university preparation programs. Closure of small colleges will bring nationwide changes that extend beyond the confines of surviving colleges. Although legislators and boards are striving for improvements, those involved in program preparation should assume responsibility. (CJH)

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Politics And Policy In The Southeastern States: Into The 90's- Economics And Policies For Educational Institutions

Presented by
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At
The Fortieth Annual Conference Of
The National Conference of Professors Of
Educational Administration
At
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff Arizona
August 1986

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Benjamin Disraeli once exclaimed that "all of civilization is but a race between education and disaster". His statement certainly seems to describe our times. Americans tend, more than most peoples, to equate schooling with education. Most technologically advanced societies, such as ours, tend to look to schooling as a refuge from their excesses. Technology demands ever increasingly more complex technology and technology must perforce be used to teach technology.

It is in the nature of free societies, such as that of the United States, to expect much of their schools and to scornfully condemn them when things seem awry in the society at large. The United States suffered a dreadful psychological disaster in the Viet-Nam war. There have been mind boggling and heart rending problems with crime, drugs, changing life styles, inflation, high unemployment, and political violence in recent years. Every Gallup poll for more than a decade has shown a growing public disenchantment with and disaffection for the public

schools and for their products. Public displeasure with schooling now extends to every part of the system: the curriculum, the teachers, the administrators, and the graduates. The public condemns every level of schooling from elementary through graduate school. The sovereign american remedy for any societal ill has always been to pass laws. Public perceptions of the inadequacies of schools have led to the passage of educational reform laws throughout the nation.

Legislatures and Boards of Regents throughout the country have responded to citizen demand for improved education by: radically changing teacher preparation programs, competency testing prior to certification, competency testing of experienced teachers, higher entrance requirements, revised curricula, mandatory teacher evaluation, mandatory staff development, performance based accreditation, merit pay, and much more.

It is interesting to note that the 14 states that comprise the Southern Regional Education Board have pioneered much of the educational reform legislation which has and is sweeping the nation. North Carolina began requiring the NTE in 1977. Louisiana started requiring passage of a test for Certification in 1977. In 1978 both Georgia and Florida began statewide testing programs. Every state in the region has followed suit in some way.

Some of the more recent political and economic events which have occurred in the southeast include attempts to

close some small state supported colleges, the shifting and combining of programs, budget cuts, changes in the certification requirements for principals, mandatory executive management institutes, and radical changes in the accreditation of schools.

Eldon Wiley asked that each panel member be prepared to discuss two policy actions in our region. The two I have chosen to discuss are: provisional certification and the attempt to close small colleges. Provisional certification of teachers and administrators and recertification through school based staff development is bound to have great and, perhaps unforeseen, impact on university preparation programs. Closure of small colleges, many predominantly black, throughout the south will bring changes to the nation that extend far beyond the confines of those colleges that survive.

Summary

Competency testing, provisional certification, performance based accreditation, career ladders, etc. are likely to be with us for a long time to come. The public confidence in our programs and our schools must be restored. Colleges and schools have graduated hordes of people who are barely literate. We have sent far too many teachers and administrators into the field who were poorly prepared. The public perceived that our programs needed to be improved and that we either would not or could not do it. Therefore legislators and boards are trying to do it

for us. It may be doubted if they can but there is no doubt that we can clean up our act and we must.